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Homeless veterans federal funding for 2010 totals \$3.2 billion, including \$150 million for
a grants program used by LI shelters***

Bay Shore, NY– On Wednesday, Rep. Steve Israel (D – Huntington) joined the directors of two homeless veterans organizations on Long Island – Frank Amalfitano, President of the United Veterans Beacon House and Gregory Curran, Northport VAMC's Homeless Veterans Coordinator – to announce the largest federal investment to date to help homeless veterans.



“On Christmas Eve on Long Island, more than 2,000 veterans will go to sleep homeless. It’s shameful that any man or woman who served our country would ever have to go to sleep on the streets,” said Rep. Israel. “These heroes risked their lives and served us honorably and now we need to honor them. This year, I successfully fought for the biggest federal investment ever to help our homeless veterans. Funding will go toward combating homelessness among veterans, support services and housing for homeless veterans, support for low income veterans and their families, and increased funding for federal grants that support local programs like the United Veterans Beacon House right here in Bay Shore.”

“This is a defining moment in the history of this nation,” said John Driscoll, President and CEO of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) in Washington, D.C. “Congress has sent a clear message that this nation’s former guardians will not be forgotten in their greatest hour of need. This funding will create housing for homeless veterans; provide support to low-income veterans’ families for the first time in U.S. history; and help hundreds of community- and faith-based organizations across America rise up with the Department of Veterans Affairs to

end veteran homelessness. We know Rep. Israel stands tall among the leadership who watches out for our wounded warriors and veterans who need help readjusting to civilian life after serving in harm's way."

The VA estimates that 131,000 veterans are homeless on any given night and 260,000 will be homeless at some point in the year. Right now, the number of homeless male and female Vietnam era Veterans is greater than the number of service persons who died during that war.

Rep. Israel fought for increased funding for homeless veterans as a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs.

The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act was passed as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY2010 and signed by President Obama on December 16, 2009. For homeless veterans the bill includes the following:

\$3.2 billion (\$421 million more than FY2009), for healthcare and support services for homeless veterans, including:

- \$26 million for a Presidential Initiative to combat homelessness
- \$150 million for the homeless grants and per diem program (\$20 million more than FY2009)
- \$20 million for supportive services for low income veterans and families
- \$21 million to hire additional personnel for the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program
- An additional \$50 million to renovate vacant buildings on VA campuses to be used as housing with supportive services for veterans.

Rep. Israel also wrote and introduced H.R. 147, the Homeless Veterans Check-Off Bill, which creates a section on annual tax return forms that would allow taxpayers to designate three dollars of their income tax payment to programs to assist homeless veterans. The legislation creates a Homeless Veterans Assistance Fund where the money would automatically be deposited and expenditures from the fund would have to be appropriated by Congress and could only be used for the purpose of providing assistance to homeless veterans. Rep. Israel's bill has 87 bi-partisan co-sponsors.

Rep. Israel serves on the House Appropriations Committee. He previously served on the House Armed Services Committee.